

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

The documentary, "Stolen Honor", is clearly an attempt to influence voters during this critical election period. Categorizing it as "news" is an attempt by Sinclair Broadcasting to sidestep the restrictions which are in place to assure that candidates receive equal air time. Sinclair's connections to the Republican party and the benefits which Sinclair stands to gain from the re-election of George Bush are well documented. As such, Sinclair's claim that they are merely airing a news story is blatantly false.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter and cannot be viewed as objective news reporting.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.